

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Q Hodding, on Iran, when the White House talks about the United States intending to continue to be restrained in our words and actions as long as progress made with respect to the hostages, and so forth, and the fact that their timetable calls for a decision on the hostage question to come up during the parliament, not expected to convene until June or so, does that mean that the United States will adopt a posture of restraint until that time, and say nothing critical -- nothing at all about the hostages -- that we're ready to accept the Iranian timetable not to question, even apart from a guarantee of freedom?

A I would refer you to the source of the statement for any interpretation of it.

Q Do you have any reaction or response to the charges by the public relations man for the deposed Shah of Iran, Mr. Armao, about his treatment and so forth?

A I'm glad to see him go on the public record, which is a refreshing treat. I don't have any comment on that.

Q Last week there was an answer given that some of the land seized around Jerusalem was, or is, owned by Palestinian U.S. citizens.

A They claim it.

Q Yes. In light of the Hickenlooper Amendment, is the United States doing anything with Israel to compensate these people as fast as possible? Or what is being done about it?

A I'm familiar with the Hickenlooper Amendment. I think the answer was that some of the ownership is claimed by people who are American citizens.

I will look into what it is that we believe to be the facts and whether or not it calls into question the Hickenlooper Amendment.

Q This Robert E. Lee character apparently was interviewed by Kabul radio and was shown on Moscow Radio.

A Moscow TV.

Q Do you have any background on him?

A I just asked that coming down here. I only want to repeat that I'm aware of no government connection whatsoever. He is a private citizen and I think that at a given point, I have a Privacy Act problem here.

Q Do you know where he comes from or how old he is?

A I think I have a Privacy Act problem here.

Q Still on the same question, according to our Moscow Bureau, TASS and the Soviet organs have dropped any reference to his alleged connection with CIA which they were hitting hard about a month ago, and they just dropped it altogether now.

A It would be refreshing for them to acknowledge that that is a bunch of baloney.

Q They quote him as saying that he has been in and out of Afghanistan three times and that he came in with "other counter-revolutionaries."

A I don't have any comment on that except that --

Q Are you officially denying that he is CIA?

A No, I just don't deal with the question of CIA.

Q (Inaudible)

A Because I was commenting on a refreshing change in attitude by the official organs of the Soviet state.

Q The Privacy Act would forbid giving his personal details?

A I have a problem with that as long as he is a prisoner and has not authorized the government to go into the details of his curriculum vitae in any way.

Q Have we made any approaches on his behalf since he's been here?

A Oh yes, we have.

Q Hodding, do you still stand on what you said the other day, that the Afghan Government indicates they are going to release him as soon as there is anything further developed on that assurance?